

Message Text

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46

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NIC-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SCCT-01 SY-04 USSS-00 EB-07 IO-10

PC-01 /084 W

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R 111520Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5977

INFO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 0149

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NU

SUBJECT: MODERATE OPPOSITION CONSIDERS NEXT MOVE

REF MANAGUA 0119

1. CONSERVATIVE LEADER FERNANDO AGUERO TOLD POLOFFS JANUARY 9 THAT HE WAS UNDECIDED ABOUT HOW BEST TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE CREATED BY THE FSLN TERRORIST ATTACK. AGUERO, WHO CLAIMS THAT HIS ORGANIZATION IS THE LEGITIMATE AND LARGEST CONSERVATIVE GROUP, HAD PLANNED TO HOLD A RALLY IN MASAYA, 20 MILES FROM MANAGUA, AT THE END OF THE MONTH BUT WAS RELUCTANT TO DO SO IF THE STATE OF SIEGE WAS NOT RAISED BY THAT TIME. HE ACCEPTED THE PROPOSITION THAT BY STANDING UP TO THE GUARDIA AND ATTEMPTING TO HOLD A RALLY EVEN IF IT WAS PREVIOUSLY PROHIBITED HE WOULD OFFSET SOME OF THE RESPECT WON BY THE SANDINISTAS FOR THEIR VALOR. HOWEVER, AGUERO SAID HE HAS BEEN
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ASSOCIATED WITH BLOODSHED IN THE PAST AND THAT MANY OF HIS

FOLLOWERS, FEARING A REPETITION, MIGHT BE RELUCTANT TO SHOW UP UNDER THESE CONDITIONS. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE STATE OF SIEGE THE GUARDIA COULD MORE EASILY HARASS PEOPLE TRAVELING TO THE RALLY AND DISCOURAGE ATTENDANCE. AGUERO SAID HIS PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATION WAS TO PREVENT ANY MORE OF HIS PEOPLE FROM GETTING KILLED WHICH HE FEARED MIGHT DAMAGE HIS ORGANIZATION IRREPARABLY. (HE WAS APPARENTLY REFERRING TO THE JANUARY 22, 1967 INCIDENT).

2. AGUERO WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT THE FSLN INCIDENT HAD SET IN MOTION FORCES WHICH WILL ULTIMATELY BRING ABOUT SOMOZA'S DOWNFALL. HE BELIEVED THAT THE INCIDENT HAD AN INCALCULABLE IMPACT ON THE GUARDIA BY ILLUMINATING THE TREMENDOUS DISTASTE WHICH THEY ARE VIEWED BY THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS. HE CLAIMED THAT THERE ARE "NOBLE" ELEMENTS WITHIN THE GUARDIA WHO WILL WANT TO CORRECT THAT IMAGE. AGUERO WAS FRANK IN HOPING FOR A COUP D'ETAT FOLLOWED BY A TRANSITIONAL CIVIL-MILITARY JUNTA ON WHICH HE WOULD SERVE.

3. IGNACIO ZELAYA, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY (PSC) AND CURRENTLY A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERATION (UDEL), TOLD POLOFFS THE SAME DAY THAT UDEL HAD TO MAKE A MOVE QUICKLY BOTH TO EXPLOIT THE CLIMATE OF EXPECTATION PRODUCED BY THE FSLN INCIDENT AND SO AS NOT TO APPEAR INTIMIDATED BY SOMOZA. UDEL HAD PLANNED SEVERAL RALLIES DURING THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, INCLUDING ONE IN MATAGALPA--THE HEART OF THE SANDINISTA RURAL CAMPAIGN. SO FAR, ZELAYA SAID HE HAD NOT NOTICED UDEL LEADERS WAVERING IN THEIR DETERMINATION TO GO AHEAD WITH THE RALLIES AS PLANNED DESPITE THE STATE OF SIEGE. WHEN ASKED ABOUT HOW FAR UDEL WAS WILLING TO GO IN DEFYING THE GOVERNMENT, ZELAYA ANSWERED THAT ITS LEADERS SEEMED DISPOSED TO SUFFER INJURY, IMPRISONMENT, AND EVEN DEATH.

4. COMMENT: THESE INTERVIEWS POINT UP THE DILEMMA FACED BY THE MODERATE OPPOSITION FOLLOWING THE FSLN INCIDENT: THEY FEEL THAT THEY HAVE TO DO SOMETHING QUICKLY BEFORE THEY LOSE THE MOMENT, BUT THEY ALSO FEEL THAT THEY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DO SO WITHOUT RISKING PHYSICAL HARM. AT THIS STAGE, UDEL SEEMS MOST LIKELY TO RISK A CONFRONTATION.

WARNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, OPPOSITION PARTIES, TERRORISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MANAGU00149
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750012-0147
From: MANAGUA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750159/aaaacacq.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MANAGUA 0119
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 SEP 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <14 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MODERATE OPPOSITION CONSIDERS NEXT MOVE
TAGS: PINT, NU, FSLN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006